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FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5017

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 002211

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/21/2021

TAGS: PREL TU CY

SUBJECT: TURKISH MFA FRUSTRATED WITH TECHNICAL TALKS AND SRSG MOELLER

Classified by DCM Nancy McEldowney, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶11. (C) Summary: MFA officials have contacted us twice in the past week to express concerns over the direction in which they see intercommunal technical talks headed and over SRSG Moeller. We have encouraged the MFA to keep their concerns out of the press and urged that they improve communication with Moeller. End Summary.

Concerns About Technical Talks, Moeller

¶12. (C) MFA Cyprus Department Head Muftuoglu called us April 13 to express concern that Greek Cypriots are trying to "hijack" the talks and include what the MFA considers final settlement issues. Muftuoglu also said that, in the MFA's opinion, SRSG Moeller was continuing to make "grave mistakes." The MFA conveyed a similar message to all P-5 embassies. We urged the MFA to look for ways to support for the talks and the UN, and to keep doubts about Moeller quiet.

¶13. (C) On April 20, at his request, we went to the MFA to speak with Muftuoglu's boss, Northeastern Mediterranean Affairs DDG Bilman. Bilman and other MFA officials had just returned from the "TRNC," where they met face-to-face with Talat for the first time since his February heart bypass surgery.

¶14. (C) Bilman expressed three concerns. First, he said he expressed concern about where discussions between Moeller, Turkish Cypriot representative Perteve and Greek Cypriot representative Tzionis were headed. They were supposed to determine the modalities of the technical talks, but instead, according to Bilman, the SRSG was continuing to discuss how to restart overall negotiations, an area that Bilman called beyond Moeller's mandate.

¶15. (C) Second, Moeller was casting doubt on the legality and viability of the Annan Plan as the basis for overall settlement. Moeller's statements so concerned Talat, according to Bilman, that he sent an April 4 letter to the SYG asking whether the SYG still backed the Plan and expected Greek Cypriots to state their proposed changes to the Plan with clarity and finality. (We e-mailed on April 21 a copy of the letter to the Department, Embassies Athens and Nicosia, USUN and USEU.)

¶16. (C) Finally, Moeller had talked about "Cypriotization"

of the Cyprus issue and not wanting "external powers" -- meaning Turkey -- to have a role.

¶7. (C) Bilman said the Turkish side is restraining itself, but he thought Moeller should be relieved of his duties. He said the Turkish side will not do anything for now, pending an answer from the SYG to Talat's letter.

¶8. (C) We urged Bilman to open a direct channel of communication with Moeller, so the MFA can directly relay their concerns and directly hear his perspective. Bilman said the MFA has had no face-to-face contact with Moeller since an early March meeting in Istanbul.

¶9. (C) Comment: Erosion of the Annan Plan and attempts to cut them out of Cyprus issues are anathema for the Turks, and they will react badly if they become convinced that either is happening. For now, they have managed to keep their renewed concerns about the talks and Moeller out of the Turkish press. However, if the Turkish side perceives these problems are continuing, they could go public in a way that will sour the technical talks. End Comment.

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